

*Guided
Interludes*

By

MARIE

MELVIN

SURPRISE

ON the GO

WITH BLAINE MARZ

Gary's MARIE MELVIN SURPRISE, not unexpectedly for anyone who knows this busy woman with gentle heart, has had her second book of poetry and rhyme published.

It's titled "Guided Interludes," and is replete with homespun, Guest-type works that are revealing of the inner warmth and humor of the writer. Her first book "Inspirational Bits from Life," was published in 1964. Royal Publishing, Dallas, Tex., is the "house" in each.

Marie, who is Mrs. Arnold Surprise, of 2615 Wabash Ave., in private life, came to Gary in 1925 as a young bride and has always been keenly interested in the growth of the city and of this area. She's a long-time member of the Lake County Poetry Club, cochairman of the Senior Citizens Library Club, and is a member and active in many other organizations.

She's also a business woman and has been a distributor for a home products company for several years. Marie is the mother of Gerald L. Dukeman, a teacher in the Gary public schools.



MRS. SURPRISE

Marie Surprise is not resting on her accomplishments. She has completed several years' research on a planned historical-humorous book that dates back to 2750 B.C. Its title is "Hats Through the Ages" which could make it a strong seller among the gentler (ha!) sex.

Marie says this work will be loaded with innumerable facts and incidents pertaining to headress which will be presented in a humorous rhyme style. Some of the material has been the basis for programs presented to clubs and other groups in this area. She hopes to have this one ready for the publisher in 1968.

To Shirley Moresko for
your refreshing pleasure

Maize Melvin Surprise

Dec '63

Guided Interludes

By

MARIE MELVIN SURPRISE

Royal Publishing Company

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Dallas, Texas 75211

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By

MARIE MELVIN SURPRISE

Printed in the United States of America.

*Dedicated to my husband and the
many friends who have encouraged
and inspired me.*

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A BROTHER GONE

Through many years you were with us
As loyal as could be
And all the while your kindly smile
Was there for us to see.
It warmed our hearts and brightened days
But now, quite well we know
That things will never be the same
For oh, we miss you so!

Throughout the years that you were here
You laughed with us and cried
And close beside us stood in tears
When other loved ones died.
You felt our joy and knew our pain
But now, without you near,
We pray that God will grant the strength
We need to dry each tear!

A BROKEN HEART

When the grandson comes to visit,
Sometimes to stay awhile
He throws and breaks his toys and with
A very crafty smile
He often pulls me by the tail
Halfway across the room
Or twists my jaw till it is raw
And I am full of gloom.

When the grandson comes to visit
I wish that I could go
And find myself a quiet place
For just a week or so.

I know I would be missed and then
Perhaps my folks would see
Their doggie has an aching heart
And needs some privacy.

A BURDENED SOUL

I thought of all they would do for me;
The jewels in my hand.
They would lift me from obscurity
And place me in command
Of people, wealth, perhaps a crown,
For these were gems most rare.
Naught in life could hold me down
Had I the diamonds there.

I stood and heard my own heartbeats
While memories filled my mind
Of weary days and dreary streets
And hoping just to find
A haven, peace, surcease from pain
And hunger stalking near.
Would such a change e'er come again
And what had I to fear?

I felt there was no need to fear.
The household trusted me.
My luck had changed since coming here
And leaving poverty.
With no one home but me alone
And wealth within my grasp
Each lustrous stone became my own.
My soul took on a task!

I never knew what it would mean
When once the gems were mine;
That every eye would hold a gleam
And every voice a fine.
That guilt would weaken me with fear
And darken every day
As time, relentlessly, each year
Exacted penalty.

And all the jewels I kept as mine
And guarded jealously
And gloated over every time
The household was away.
Their value I had not inquired
For never did I dare
But knew they meant security
For me on leaving there.

And now when years have hastened by
I find that I must stay.
Security was priced so high
It choked my soul away.
The jewels were baubles made of paste
I found out yesterday!
Throughout the years of greed and waste
Dame fortune laughed at me.

A CAKE-TESTER

Our Mary was unhappy,
Her Charlie, big and tall,
Was extremely fond of eating
And pastries best of all.

Now he liked steaks and chops and roasts
That Mary knew how to cook
And also every casserole
Which had a tasty look.

But when it came to cake or pie
(And cake he liked the best)
It seemed that every one she baked
He never could digest,
But rolled and tossed and groaned all night
And then became quite grim
Until poor Mary was a wreck
With fear of losing him.

And then she went to see a friend
That she had known for years
And while they drank a cup of tea
She spilled out all her fears.
Her friend gave Mary a tester then
To use for every cake
And told her how to use it for
Each one that she would make.

And now our Mary is thrilled all day
For Charlie, big and tall,
Is extremely fond of eating
And her pastries best of all.

A CENTURY BEHIND

Upon this day, the twelfth of August,
I have been a century here
And yet I find it hard to believe
I have reached my hundreth year.

Throughout each day of one hundred years
I have found so much to do,
And while my feet were going fast
Hands and brain were busy, too.
There was no time for delinquency
For then our country was young.
We hailed the flag in a tiny school
And the Star-Spangled Banner sung.

We labored hard throughout each day
And our work was never o'er.
Although our pleasures were mighty few
We enjoyed them all the more.

And so the years have hastened by.
To believe is hard, I find,
For there is still so much to do
With a hundred years behind!

A CHANGE AT HOME

I know there's something wrong at home
But what it is about
Or why I'm always left alone
I cannot figure out.
When Mom comes in Pop disappears
With not a single word
And I can see it's best for me
If I am never heard.

When they are gone I curl up tight
Within my doggie bed
And there I think with all my might
But just a doggies' head

Is not enough to figure out
Why parents act so queer.
They used to play and were so gay
But now are never here.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Something seems to happen
As the holidays draw near
Which tends to soften hardness
And alleviate our fear.
It is in the air around us
And on every face we see
A reflected Christmas spirit
That glows in you and me.

Something seems to happen
That sort of clears the slate
Of all the selfishness
And bitterness and hate
And, though only temporary,
Dear God, how heavenly sweet
To see the spirit shining
In every face we meet!

Yes, something seems to happen
And O, dear Lord, we pray
That always it will happen
For us each Christmas day;
That when the great nativity
Revives our faith again
We each will find compassion
For all our fellow men.

A CRAZY YARN

There was a man upon a deck
Who had a mole upon his neck
And while the ship sank all aflame
And no one could recall his name,
There came a sad heart-rending cry
From off a ship that stood near by.
Each man was frightened as could be
And each so deaf he could not see
Yet every one could plainly hear
The roar of waves and breakers near.

And while a stillness reigned supreme
About the ship, a bright sun beamed
Upon the men, who scurried like rats
And feared they might be drowned like cats.

The sky was black— The lightening flashed.
The thunder boomed — the breakers crashed.
The smiling sun beamed from the sky
And baby starlets scampered by,
But in a boat where all was dark
A whiskered man made this remark:
“Look back and see that man on deck.
Behold that mole upon his neck
For him I know, he is my brother!”
“Pshaw, that’s a girl!” argued another.

But while the men in life boats wept
And everyone was saved except
The lad who stood upon the deck
And wore a mole upon his neck,

The flaming ship went to its grave
Where sun flowers bloom and bull frogs shave,
Where day is night and night is day
And baby fish all laugh and play.
But I can see you disagree.
In fact, I know you're doubting me
So I will bring this to an end
And say that you are right, my friend!

A FRIENDLY NOTE

It seems that just a friendly note
Expressed with words of cheer
Can brighten up the deepest gloom
And rid a soul of fear.

Then let us drop the friendly notes
To many that we know
And send afar the brightest thoughts
To add sweet bits of glow.

This life, it seems, is very short
But we can make it bright
With sunshine beams and bits of dreams
In friendly notes we write.

A STANLEY DEALER

Praises are sung for the nurse maid
Because of her sweet loving care,
The cook for his stew, the baker, too,
Each one comes in for his share,

The painter with his works of art,
The model enthralled with each craze
But there is the gal with the "Stanley Smile"
Who never expects any praise.

The politician gets famous
Because of promises made.
The carpenters' cheer heard far and near
Praises each man of his trade.
Even the salesman is lauded
Especially if he gets a raise
But the gal with a smile, the Stanley Gal
Would never expect any praise.

It's true that she wanders all over,
Has coffee with this one and that,
Knocks at each door—sometimes scrubs a floor
Even makes friends with the cat.
She teaches each wife how to polish,
To clean up and brighten her days
But in spite of such work the poor little jerk
Would never expect any praise.

She travels with rumbles and rattles
Not certain at all where they are.
With orders sacked and handles packed
She's never too sure of her car.
She often must call for a taxi
And reaches her dem in a daze
But the poor little jerk in spite of such work
Would never expect any praise!

AGE AND WISDOM

Life gets us tangled up sometimes,
We don't know where we stand.
We look far back and down the track,
About on either hand
And gaze upon the way we came,
The ups and downs and all
And find we had it not so bad
When we consider all.

Life deals us out a bitter part
And we are sure we're through.
We are unwise and don't realize
There is a rosy hue.
Once we are halted then we see
Dark clouds were there, no doubt,
But happy then we might have been
Were they turned wrong side out.

A HELPLESS DAD

My joyous winsome little girl
With merry eyes and nimble feet,
With cheeks a-glow and hair a-curl,
Life for you is heavenly sweet.
While bells are ringing and the beams
Of sunshine brightens all your dreams
And tales of brownie, king or knight
O'er flows your heart with wild delight,
I pray that you might always be
From every care and trouble free.

My crushed and broken little flower,
How very much you had to learn
And now that shame has bowed your head
You do not know which way to turn.
How much I wish I could erase
The shadows from your lovely face,
That you had never had to bear
The grief I see depicted there
For every pain that you have had
Has hurt the heart of your old dad.

A LONELY DAD

There he lies upon the floor,
Lonely ragged and old.
Linda could not love him more
Had he been made of gold.
Tossing him, she romped about
Her ringlets all a-twirl,
Throwing him this way and that,
Our merry little girl.

There he lies, dispirited,
A weary dog, alone.
No doubt he is longing, too,
For Linda to come home.
His button eyes stare vacantly,
His saw-dust heart is sad
With longing for his mistress,
The joy of her old dad.

A MOM ALONE

I wonder what is wrong with me,
An old woman of seventy-three,
With many gifts beneath my tree
It's happy, indeed, I ought to be.

There is a robe of dainty blue
The postman left — a gift from Sue
Who lives in Dallas far away
Too far to come for Christmas day.

There is a coat of fur, my own,
From Bill who could not make it home
With his new wife and Fran and Jean,
The family I have never seen.

I like the dress that came from Nell
With hat to match — she wished me well
But said they could not get away
To come back home for Christmas day.

Beautiful gifts — beauty galore
Purchased afar, and what a chore,
Left by the postman at my door
To fill an otherwise empty floor.

I sit alone on Christmas day
And live again in memory
When all my loved ones were at home
And I was not a mom alone.

A PART OF ME

A part of me, no longer there
Has gone away. How will I fare?
It was a part I always had
Since first I knew my mom and dad,
Since first I bounced upon his knee,
Since first she loved and cuddled me.

Through many years that swiftly went
They waited there while I, content,
Went gaily, merrily on my way
But how I long for them today!
I look at empty rooms and sad,
And think of happy times we had.
I look at windows naked and cold
And, looking back, they seem to scold:
"You put them off too long, my dear,
Now you've come but they're not here!"

Throughout the years my heart will ache.
With friends about it will cry and break
And in the midst of gaiety
I will feel the loss of part of me.

A POET'S PROBLEMS

A poet without his problems
One scarce will ever see
For such a combination
Would be a calamity.

A problem is a prodger
That forces thoughts to come;
That beckons to the meter
And makes the rhythm hum.

That poet becomes enchanted
With thoughts he knows are new
And inspiration drives him.
He writes the whole night through
Yet never is he lonely.
Word pictures always there
Remain his boon companions.
Forgotten is his care.

A PRAYER

Oh Father up in heaven
Who watches o'er us all,
Who bids the stars to shine at night,
Who watches o'er the sparrows flight,
Who notes the night-birds call,
Who tints the sky in early dawn
With coming of the day,
Who sends young spring to dance and flirt,
Who ministers to a lover's hurt,
Who paints with colors gay — —

Oh Father up in heaven,
The greatest one of all,
Who watches when I go astray,
Who guides my steps throughout each day,
Please catch me when I fall!

A SELFISH SOUL

A thickening crust of selfishness
Encased her soul so tight,
Protecting it, enclosing it
From every pain and fright.
She never knew emotional depths,
Great heights nor dark despair
Since she was but a stranger
To sympathy or care.

The crust of selfishness became
So strong throughout the years
Another's sorrow did not sway
Nor did another's tears.
She only skimmed life's surface o'er,
Self-centered, vain, alone,
Since she remained a stranger
To all life but her own.

A SOLDIER WENT AWAY

The cornstalks had a party.
They held it one bright day
In honor of a soldier brave
Who was to go away.
They danced and sang and shook themselves
And waved their tassels high.
"Be sure you do your very best!"
They yelled it to the sky.

One fellow older than the rest,
Too old to dance, stood still
But he made music for the rest
By singing loud and shrill.

They danced and sang and tossed their leaves
And whirled in a real shindig.
The soldier went to win the war.
And they died of fatigue.

A STEP OR TWO EACH DAY

Can one really be a Christian
In the world we see today
Where evil is applauded
And sinfulness has sway;
Where principles of conduct
So important I once learned
Are ever now amusing
Or something to be spurned?

Can one really be a Christian?
Yes, I'm sure each person can
For in every year of time
Since this world of ours began
Christianity has blossomed
In the midst of vice and sin.
We must keep our sense of values
And not let the evil in
For no one becomes a Christian
Suddenly but step by step
With weak spots points of entry
That were challenged when we slept.

Though our lives are ever weakened
And we're challenged all the way
Still, in faith we keep on climbing
Just a step or two each day.

A SWEET REFRAIN

We stood and talked, my friend and I,
Across a picket fence
Exchanging news and jokes and views
That I have thought of since.

The look of warmth, the ready smile
Which was of him a part
Will e'er remain a sweet refrain
Imprinted on my heart.
We laughed and talked, this friend and I,
But little did we guess
That with a leer death stalked quite near
While we enjoyed a jest.
His wife called out and he went in
Then soon I heard her cry.
While I bent low above my hoe
My friend went in to die.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

I hear a stamp upon the porch
And the children race to see.
"More Christmas cards!" they cry,
"I hope there's one for me."

It is not long till Christmas now
And cards come on the run,
The basket that we thought would do
Won't hold another one.

When father trudges in from work
His face careworn and gray,
It brightens when he sees the stack
The postman left that day.

And when he settles down to read
The notes from Bill and Min
The tiredness seems to vanish
And he looks young again.

I sit and watch and then I think
How lonely life would be
If I had not a single friend
To send their love to me.

Then I can see the meaning clear
Of the season and the star
The shepherds and the little babe,
The gifts brought from afar,

The music, greetings, ringing bells,
To me it now is clear
For if a soul is filled with love
There is no room for fear.

I DO BELIEVE

If I did not believe in God,
Creator of us all
Who guides my steps throughout each day
And whispers low when'er I stray
And sheds a light along the way
Then, truly I would fall.

Because I do believe in God
I know there is a plan
To life and that we hold the key
That will unlock the mystery.
In the "book of life" we truly see
He proves his love for man.

GOD STANDS INSIDE THE DOOR

Each year the world seems smaller.
On every hand we see
The vices all increasing
In great rapidity.
In each and every country
The struggle to survive
Seems to cast an ominous gloom
On every phase of life.

Each year the speed is greater
And competition, too,
And everything is mortgaged
To make a dream come true;
A dream made up of avarice,
Of lust for power and gain,
One that keeps our God outside
And helps the devil reign.

HER PRESENCE

(In Memory of Lizzie Leonard)

We feel her presence with us yet
The way she used to be.
Her tenderness and kindness
And rare vitality

Will always be a part of us
And through the coming years
The memories that are left to us
Will serve to dry our tears.

We feel her presence with us yet
And know that it will stay
A very vital part of us
Throughout each future day.
We know that every life she touched
Will feel less doubt and fear
Because of all the love she had
And gave when she was here.

HE'S SUCH A PET

There was a time I reigned supreme
All by myself — alone
And I could lie around and dream
With everything my own
But then a change was brought about
In our house one sad day
When Mom held up a tiny pup
And said, "He's come to stay!"

For many years I was the queen
(That really is my name)
And I was pampered. It would seem
That life would stay the same
But then along came that sad day
(The one I won't forget)
When Mom held up that ugly pup
And said, "He's such a pet!"

There is no peace or quiet now
For barks fill all the air.
And chaos is the rule, somehow,
Though no one seems to care
With family nerves at breaking point
And mine a wreck, you bet,
Still Mom holds up that ugly pup
And says, "He's such a pet!"

IF YOU COULD TALK

If you could talk, my little friend,
I wonder what you'd say.
I wonder what you're thinking of
As you hop about in play.
I wonder if you have a wife
And little babies, too,
And if you're very fond of them
And if they're fond of you.

Perhaps you are not married, dear,
But maybe, you're in love.
Somehow, I rather think you are
For you roll your eyes above
And warble notes so sweetly soft
Then sadly look away.
If you could talk, my feathered friend,
I wonder what you'd say.

KEEP TO THE RIGHT

A rushing forth and pressing on —
It seems that life must be
A rushing forth and pressing on
Toward eternity.

We seldom ever stop to think
Or even wonder why
We push and pant and rail and rant
From toddler till we die.

A rushing forth and pressing on
It seems each life must be,
But well it is to realize
The utter brevity,
Of every life for it is short
Yet God has told us this:
"I am the light." Keep to the right
And then we can not miss.

I COURT BUT YOU

I court but you, sweet memory,
For oh, I love you so.
You bring to mind all I left behind
In years of long ago.
When skies are black then I turn back
To days when they were blue.
It comforts me, sweet memory,
When I court none but you.

I court but you, sweet memory,
You help to ease the pain.
You dim the tears by the change of years
And make me young again
And I creep upstairs to say my prayers
As once I used to do.
It comforts me, sweet memory,
When I court none but you.

IF WE SHOULD PART

If ever there should come a time
When I would have to say,
"This is where we part, my dear,
I go another way,"
I hope that God will grant me time
And words to make it clear
How very sweet you've always been;
How very good and dear.

If ever I should have to go
And leave you, love of mine,
I hope to make you understand
If God but grants the time,
That darkest corners of my life
Have glowed because of you
And I will hope sweet memories
Will last your whole life through.

LIFE IS BRIEF

I can remember it so well
The way I felt that day;
Sort of hushed and scared inside
Of something big and dark and wide
That seemed to stalk and hover near
And fill my childish heart with fear.

I can remember it so well,
The odor of the flowers
That seemed to spread to every room

Bringing loneliness and gloom
And how I hurt when mama cried
And told me our Aunt Rose had died.
I can remember all about
The way I felt that day;
Staying close by mother's side,
Fearing shadows dark and wide,
Hearing voices hushed and dim
And the sadness of a hymn,
Seeing people wipe an eye
As they moved slowly by
And looked at her. I lowered my head
And whispered low, "Aunt Rose is dead!"

I can remember him so well;
The lad I was that day
And pity him for childish fears.
Because of wisdom acquired with years
Of heartbreak, sadness and grief,
I have learned that life is brief.

THE FIRST STEPS

He took one step and then fell down
And stared with great delight
At each adoring parent
Who marveled at the sight.

He pulled himself back up again
Proud of what he had done
And toddled half across the room;
Their precious little son.

LIFE IS LIKE THAT

When you feel that life is rugged
And that you could never win
And you turn down invitations
'Cause your pants have gotten thin;
When the bills are heaped about you,
Gas and lights, rent on flat,
Your thoughts are grim and hopes are dim
But then, we know life is like that.

When your check has gotten smaller
And you hesitate to say
To anyone who mentions it
That you still bring home some pay
For you know that all is mortgaged
Even what you feed the cat,
And it makes you so doggoned blue
But then, we know life is like that.

When you hear the folks repeating
That the world is getting worse
And the by gone days were better
Far more peaceful, not a curse,
Then recall, the world's forgotten
There's a God who's still at bat
And it will have to live and learn
Because we know life is like that.

MA'S CAUTIONS

"We're gonna have company tomar, Pa,
And you must act 'spectable'," says Ma.
"Don't blow yer nose and, sakes alive,

Don't rare back in yer cher and say,
Wal, folks, git bizzy and chaw away!
You make me feel right sickish, Pa,
The way you eat yer food," says Ma.
"You make them noises and chaw so fast
And overload when the grub is passed.
It sorta 'pears that you don't keer
That folks all watch when they kum here
And when they laff it's jist at you
'Cause of all them things you do.
I know fer sure you'll break my heart
If you don't eat the way you art!"

AN ANGEL

An angel dear to you was sent
To fill your heart with more content,
To mist the eyes and glow the face,
To clothe you in a sweeter grace,
To make the heart a kinder thing
And softer like a breeze in spring,
To bring you both much pride and joy
And so he will, your angel boy.

MY GREATEST BLESSING

I find it hard to put in words
Just what I wish to say
To the very best of mothers
On this her special day.
Since I am older now I know
(With children of my own)
The precious underlying gift

Of faith bestowed at home.
I know how hard it was for you
When questions I would ask,
To answer patiently each one
And now I know the task
Of building character fine and good;
A body healthy—strong.
My heritage so priceless, Mom,
I want to pass along
To little children of my own.
While gathered round my knee,
I shall instill in them the kind
Of faith you gave to me.

I find it hard to put in words
Just what I wish to say
To the very best of mothers
On this, her special day
But hope you will remember, dear,
These words for they are true,
The greatest blessing of my life
Has been the gift of you.

MY UNCLE SAM

I know of nothing else in life
That gets me down so much
As long about the time of year
When 'Sammy' makes his touch.
I get as cross as a grizzly bear,
Worse than I usually am,
Because I am reminded
Of dear old Uncle Sam.
Just when it seems that I am fine

(You all know what I mean)
My Uncle's hand is reaching
In the pockets of my jeans
And just about one-fourth
Of each carefully hoarded dollar
I find is his and that is when
I start to kick and holler.

I count and count the precious 'bucks'
I saved the whole year through
Then hand them over for a purse
And one I dreamed of, too.
Then comes the words that slay me
For the clerk says, "Oh, my dear,
We both forgot about the tax!
More money is needed here."

No matter how I search and search
Not a cent upon myself
Can I find for that fool tax
So the purse goes on the shelf,
And I'm so mad at Uncle Sam
My temper's growing worse
Because I hoarded for a year
Yet could not have that purse!

MY GRANDSON
(To Tommy Dukeman)

A precious fellow came our way
Just six months ago today
And his funny grin,

His gurgle of glee
Makes life complete
For Grandpa and me.

MY SONNY BOY

Dear little Sonny Boy
With eyes of brightest blue
You little know how Mother's arms
Are aching just for you.
Tucked within your little bed
At the closing of a day
Do you ever think of me
Once you've ceased your play?

Dear little Sonny Boy
With hands willing to give,
A mouth eager to kiss,
A life before you to live,
I am looking years ahead
And praying you will grow
To be a person fine and good
And one the world will know.

ONCE I LOVED YOU

Once I knew I loved you
For the birds so sweetly sang.
The flowers bloomed,
The skies were blue,
Bells of love within me rang.

Hither and yon on dancing feet
I never seemed to tire.
A touch of your hand on mine, dear,
Could set my soul on fire.

Now my heart is empty
And the birds no longer sing.
Days of yearning,
Nights of sorrow,
Just a writhing soul in pain.
My every joy you stole away
And left me lone and sad.
Though hating you yet still I grieve
For all that I once had.

PANSEY EMMELINE

In a certain store I always buy
The many things I need
No matter if it's slip or gown,
A dress or turnip seed.

Should I but need a chair or lamp,
A coat, a dress or hoe
I would not buy it somewhere else
But to this store I'd go.

Although last month I got a shock
That almost laid me low!
I feel it best that I should tell
You why it was a blow.

You see, upon the second floor
In the maternity
There is this gal who has a bulge
Which one can plainly see.

Her name is Pansey Emmeline
And she looks sweet and dear.
You must agree it's strange that she
Has been like that a year
With not one single little change.
Although it sounds insane
One month ago — eight months ago
She looked the very same.

There never was one bit of change
As I would surely know
As every day I am down town
And right up there I go
And stand and shiver while I stare
To see if there's some gain.
I'm pregnant, too, and I'll tell you
She puts me in a strain.

The reason is when I should sleep
I never fail to dream
Because I keep remembering her;
Poor Pansey Emmeline,
And I recall each tale I've read
And tremble then with fear
For, holy gee, it just might be
I'll stay this way a year!

PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

People people everywhere
Millions here — millions there
Yet how strange,
Not one we see
Is just like you
Or just like me.

People, people lonely, lost,
In the sea of life tempest tossed,
Jetsam, Flotsam
Of the sea
Yet none like you
And none like me,

People lonely, in despair
Hunting here and searching there,
Fighting, hating.
The mystery?
Not one like you
Not one like me.

THE ARTIFICIAL TREE

It's been with us a lot of years,
That artificial tree.
It's seen our laughter and our tears,
Our sorrow and our glee.
Jerry trimmed it years ago
Before he went away
And we thought as we watched him go
The tree was sad that day.

It's been with us a long long time
As years have hastened by.
And watched with us our David climb
To hang the star on high.
It's shared with him and Tommy, too,
Their many secrets gay.
With tinsel of gold and stars of blue
It gleamed each Christmas day.

It's been with us a lot of years
And so the tree must stay
Because with age comes painful fears
That cling to yesterday.
It's truly now a part of us
So, come next Christmas day,
The little tree will gleam and shine
With decorations gay.

THE BOTHER OF CHRISTMAS

"I'm sending out no Christmas cards,"
I heard my neighbor say.
"It's rather silly all that fuss
And bother anyway."
I thought of all her many friends
And some I knew were dear
But each who failed to get a card
Would have less Christmas cheer.

I thought of what a saddened world
This one of ours would be
If no one ever sent their love
Across the land or sea.

I saw the story of Jesus,
Now ever sweet and new,
And the thrill and joy of Christmas
Become a burden, too.

And soon the love of friend and home
And even that of land
Would just become a selfish thing
No one could understand
And so I'm thankful that we have
The sweet nativity
And those who bother sending love
To folks like you and me.

THE CHERUB

You ask a lot of questions, lad,
As one of five will do
So come and sit upon my knee
While I explain to you.
When mama said her prayers at night
And often in the day,
She asked the dear God please to send
A little babe our way.

She prayed so very long and hard
That finally God did hear
And chose his loveliest angel
To live with us down here
And so the precious little one
Was born to us today.
Oh, yes your mom will bring him home
For he has come to stay.

How does he look? He has ten toes
And fingers just like you
And lots of hair, a tiny mouth
And eyes of deepest blue,
A button nose to pinch like this
And shell like ears of pink
And when he sucks his thumb he looks
A lot like you I think.

Now listen to me closely, lad
For this I want to say.
If we would keep the little babe
That God has sent our way
Then you, a boy of five, must help
Make ours a happy home
So God will smile and let us keep
The cherub for our own.

EMBERS

There will be sorrowful days, dear,
And many of regret.
There will be lonely days, dear,
When you cannot forget.
There will be countless hours of pain
When you cannot control
The images that memory paints
Upon a tortured soul.

You will not soon forget, dear,
Though easy now it seems
All the wondrous times we had
And then the broken dreams.

When you have left me here alone
And we are far apart
You will find you carry still
A yearning in your heart.

THE GREATEST JOY

The day that I stood trembling
While I whispered low, "I do,"
And beside me stood a dream
Who was kind of trembly, too,
Then I felt that all the world
Should take a look and see
What a wonderous thing was happening
To a common lad like me.

The day that I stood trembling
Till the ring I could not find
And some one slipped it to me
With a whisper from behind,
And I kissed your quivering mouth
Then I knew this thing was true
And what had been an empty life
Would now be full of lovely you.

The day I stood beside you,
Just a lad of eight and ten
And beside me stood a dream
Who was only sixteen then,
I was certain that no greater
Joy could ever come my way
And do you know it never did
Till our son was born today!

THERE IS AN ART

There is an art to everything
As one day I found out
And since, of my ability,
I seem to have some doubt.

Our kindly oak grown up from seed
Into a spreading tree
Was needing a trim of top and limb.
The job was up to me.

Now after many a family row
Resulting in office flight,
I hoped that I, an amateur,
Could do the job up right.

With great distrust and much of dread
I finally chose the day
And feeling grim, climbed on the limb
I meant to saw away.

I puffed and sawed and then I clawed
For things soon happened fast.
A bad mistake — then crack and break
And all the world went past.

Now underneath the kindly oak
I rest a splintered knee
Because, although I know my law,
I cannot trim a tree.

THERE IS NO DOUBT

There is no doubt, no single doubt,
Whatever be your age,
No matter what your life has been
Nor all the battles waged;
No matter all the honors heaped
Nor laurels you have won
Nor how sublime there'll come a time
When your lifes' work is done.

There is no time, no single time
We man our boat alone
Nor will there ever come a time
When everything is known.
Although it seems that science reigns
And louder is its cry
The scientist, too, like me and you
Will one day have to die.

THAT KIND OF DAY

It was a day so hurried and rushed
That all was out of step.
I washed the dishes — broke up three
And then sat down and wept.
I grabbed the garbage, broke the bag
And spilled it on the floor
That I had finished waxing
And then I cried some more.

I spooned the mess into a sack
And tossed it in the can
Then hastened out to buy some food
To feed the inner-man.
I found my keys, backed the car
And drove it to the store
Then with the motor running
I slammed and locked the door.

A grocery cart I pushed about
And filled it to the top.
The groceries sacked, I carried them
Although I nearly dropped
To my home, ten blocks or more,
And groaning, dropped in bed.
The car? Well, over at the store!
I wished that I was dead.

THAT LITTLE ONE

That little one you're waiting for
With greatest pride and joy;
The babe who'll make it all worth while
(Be it a girl or a boy)
Will brighten up your every hour
And make each one complete
So may this gift bring you a lift
And keep you ever sweet.

A DAUGHTER

I always thought a daughter of
My very very own
Would be just like a dancing ray
Of sunshine in my home
And so I prayed through many years
That God would send my way
A darling little baby girl
To brighten up each day.

It seems that God had other plans
For I am sure that he
Could not have failed to hear the prayer
I said so earnestly.
He sent the boy I longed for, too,
With pug nose, hair a-curl
And on the day he married you
Then God gave me my girl.

THE ONE KEY

Christ is the key to the kingdom.
We are losing that kingdom today.
In our struggle to hold boundary lines
We give sectarianism full sway.
Such egotism kills unity
The kind that our founders knew.
Ours should be a living organism
That embraces each point of view.

Never should a church exclude others
When not one is perfect we know
And spiritual boundaries drawn
Only help deep hatreds to grow.
Is it too much to hope for one star
With no lines marking east or west?
Is it too much to dream of a church
That will welcome all to its breast?
A church with no circles drawn
That will help the weary find rest?
That one will be the key to the kingdom
And the one our Father will bless.

THE MAN OF YESTERDAY

I used to think when I was young
And all my kids were small
Of just how full my life would be
Of peace and quiet and all
When once I reached sixty or so.
Dear me, the plans were gay.
But I am there and where oh, where
Is the man of yesterday?

I used to dream and plan back then
With youngsters on my knee
(A wife that cried and said she died
The day she married me)
Of just how great would be my state
When I was sixty, say —
Now I am there but where oh, where
Is the man of yesterday?

I used to make big plans back then
About what I would do
With youngsters grown, time of my own,
Responsibilities few
But when a drastic change came on
I cannot rightly say.
This much I know — he's tired and slow,
That man of yesterday.

THE METHODIST COOK

Now the world is full of artists
Of all kinds, you will agree.
There's the man who does cartooning
And the one who paints a tree
And the engineer of bridges
Or the author of a book
But for me there is no other
Like the Methodist cook.

I have watched the painter working
While he shaded this or that
And I've seen the fashion artist
Making rosettes for a hat.
I have seen the decorator
Fastening draperies on a hook
But I've never met the equal
Of the Methodist cook.

I have watched the cabinet maker
While he used a plane and saw
And the beauty he created
Seemed to fill my soul with awe.

While he labored I have marveled
And have pondered, then forsook
His creations for the wonders
Of the Methodist cook.

Though I've viewed the arts of many
None have ever caught my eye
Like the palate itchin' goodness
Of a Methodist cake or pie.
When the women start to servin'
Foods that like a picture look
I'm a gourmet just adorin'
The Methodist cook!

THE OLD GRAMAPHONE

The twilight shadows lengthen
As I'm rockin' here tonight
And each lightnin' bug is flickerin'
On and off his little light.
As I listen frogs are croakin'
With a sound that's kind of lone
And I'm lost in recollections
Of the first old gramophone.

The twilight shadows deepen
As I trail away back down
To a boyhood when Pa ordered
That first music box in town.
When it came the neighbors gathered,
Some in fear of what was new
While others made dire predictions
Of what the world was comin' to.

The darkness comes more quickly
While I rock and rock in thought.
I am ponderin' on the changes
That the many years have wrought;
The gramophone, the radio
And T. V. — then quite soon
I am thinkin' we'll be listenin'
To sweet music from the moon.

THE OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

The world ain't like it used to be
A lot of years ago.
They started plans for Christmas then
As soon as they had snow.
Old Dobbin wore his sleigh bells gay,
They carried in the wood
And readied up for Christmas day
In every way they could.

They worked and toiled for Christmas
And never fooled around.
They baked till on that day they had
Their tables loaded down.
The cakes and cookies all were baked
The taffy pulled and sich —
The tree was trimmed and mistletoe
Was hung 'round to betwitch.'

The world ain't like it used to be.
They work in stores, alack!!
They now bring home their pies and cakes
For Christmas in a sack.

With T. V. now and radio,
Commercializin' done
I miss that Christmas of years ago,
That good old - fashioned one!

THINKING OF YOU

Our thoughts are hovering near you
And we're longing just to do
Something that would tell you
We know what you're going through;
Only something that would show you
We are with you all the way
And yet, there's nothing we can do
And there's little we can say.

Maybe it will help remembering
Parties, picnics, all our fun.
Memories now are all you have
Since your loved ones' work is done
And we know you cherish many
Precious ones as side by side
You have traveled on together
Since you two were groom and bride.

Therefore, having all your memories
That no gold on earth could buy,
You will always have him near you
Till you meet him by and by.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

The months have hastened one by one
And brought again the time
When we will hang the holly wreath
Upon your door and mine;
When we will seek and search about
For just the gift and touch
To bring some cheer and banish fear
In those we love so much.

The year has hastened by on wings
And brought the time around
That fills to overflowing
A world with joy profound;
That makes the cynic marvel
And contemplate again
While children sing and voices ring
With good will toward all men.

And lo, the holidays are here
With cedar smell and pine;
The joyousness of Christmas
But, in your heart and mine,
We know the worlds' afflictions
And know they will not cease
Till once again it welcomes in
Our host, the prince of peace.

WE NEED THIS DAY

Throughout long days and weeks and months
We labor at the task
Of getting wealth and keeping health
And much more do we ask

For security and harmony
When we pray. Oh, yes, we pray
But soon forget as we fuss and fret
With the problems of each day.

And then comes this wondrous day,
This one in all the year
When angels sing and bells all ring
And troubles disappear;
When hats are doffed and hearts grow soft
While secrets fill the air;
When colors gay are on display
And joy is everywhere.

And how we need on this great day
To chart our course once more!
We need to see the nativity
As the wise men did of yore.
We all need more faith, less greed
And a kindlier spirit, too;
A humility we seldom see.
What wonders this could do!

YES AND NO

My Grandpa was the strangest man
Who always got his way
Yet never would commit himself
In anything he'd say.
When asked a question point blank
He'd clear his throat just so
And wink his eye. Then his reply
Would be a "Yes" and "No."

My Grandpa was my dearest friend.
I loved him best of all
Because his grin helped me to win
And softened every fall
But if a decision was needed
He could become my foe.
It was his way to spit and say:
"Wal, son, it's yes and no."

How Grandpa ever was so brave
I cannot figure out.
He often fought the Indians
And killed some, too, no doubt.
He showed me tomahawks and guns,
A canoe, and how to row
But a decision grim was not for him.
He made it "Yes, and No."

How Grandpa ever got Grandma
Is more than I can see.
It must have been when she met him
She tossed out modesty
And 'popped the question' point blank
Which must have been a blow
Right to his head or he'd have said
"Wal, Sal, it's yes and no!"

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

I work until my bones all ache
I climb and stoop and bend.
I wash and scrub and clean and wax
For housework has no end.

I change each picture on the wall
And rush to make a stew
Then in from work comes my big 'jerk'
And says, "What did you do?"

I feel my heart commence to crack
And all my teeth to grind.
I think of all the work I did
And anger makes me blind
But then that 'jerk' I want to kick
Till he would need a crutch
Turns on the grin that "roped me in"
And I say, "nothin' much!"

YOUR CHILD'S GRANDMA

(For Marge and Harlan)

One day we sat with coffee, dear,
A day in early fall,
And had some lunch which I've a hunch
I did not see at all
For just a bit self-consciously
And in a timid way,
You said to me, "Please, will you be
Our child's Grandma someday?"

You looked ethereal, quite as if
You felt an angel's wing
And suddenly I knew that we
Both heard the angels sing
For in my heart there sprang a joy
Which I could not convey
When you asked me if I would be
Your child's Grandma someday.

YOU PROMISED

It seems but yesterday you said
To me you would be true.
You kissed my lips and hair and eyes
And held me close to you.
Long nights in June beneath a moon
And in a realm of dreams,
I felt your kiss—sweet heavenly bliss—
But yesterday, it seems.

It seems but yesterday you said
Our love would stand the test.
You held me close and whispered ours
Would be a perfect love nest.
There'd be a home of our very own
With trees and flowers gay
And babies, too, would come we knew
And dreamed of yesterday.

It seems but yesterday you said
Those words, my dear, to me
And now you tell me you must go
And I must set you free.
The times we've had—some good, some bad—
The babe who could not stay —
Surely you must have memories, too.
It seems but yesterday.

